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FIVE CHARGED WITH FEMA FRAUD

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA - Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, Jim Letten, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana, and James Bernazzani, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), New Orleans, announced today that complaints were filed on October 19, 2005, against **GARLAND ROBERTSON**, 28, of LaPlace; **JENNIFER INNERARITY**, 35, of Hammond; **DARRELL INNERARITY**, 41, of Hammond; **JUSTIN AMATO**, 24, of Covington, and **RENE LASALLE**, 31, of Covington, charging them with making false representations in order to obtain FEMA assistance to which they were not entitled in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001(a)(2).

NEWS RELEASE

Page - 2 -

October 19, 2005

The Inneraritys claimed they evacuated from their home in Kenner, Louisiana when in truth they had moved prior to the hurricane to Tangipahoa Parish. Lasalle, while incarcerated in a St. Tammany Parish jail in Slidell, claimed he was at home during the storm and entitled to evacuation benefits. Robertson claimed a false address on his FEMA application to make it appear he had evacuated. Amato falsely claimed to have evacuated in order to collect FEMA assistance when in truth he had not evacuated.

Each defendant faces a maximum penalty of five (5) years imprisonment, as well as a fine of up to \$250,000 and three (3) years of supervised release if convicted.

Attorney General Gonzales stated, "With so many deserving families in need of help in the wake of this tragedy, those who are not true victims and who take wrongful advantage of the assistance programs will be investigated and prosecuted."

United States Attorney Jim Letten reiterated that a criminal complaint is an allegation of a criminal offense, and that charged criminal defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty based upon proof beyond a reasonable doubt.

Prosecution of these matters is being handled by Assistant U. S. Attorneys Carter K.D. Guice, Jr., Dorothy M. Taylor, and Peter M. Thomson, as part of the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force.

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